



President DuBridges, Commencement speaker Clarence B. Randall, and Albert B. Ruddock, chairman of the Caltech Board of Trustees, at the 61st Commencement.

NOT THEY, BUT WE

**The educated man,
and his responsibility
to society**

by CLARENCE B. RANDALL
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I love Commencements. For a few brief moments we set aside the crises of the world and just like each other. Everybody is proud. The university is proud, and the parents are proud, and the graduates are proud though a little relieved; and I'm proud, so we're going to have a grand time together.

I like also to be here to witness the growing movement of partnership between business and industry. Time was when the professors and the business men didn't speak altogether in friendly tones, one with the other. That is gone and we recognize that today we hold in trust, we in business and they in education, the preservation of our heritage, and we propose to go forward together, each supporting the other.

I suppose the one thing we all have uppermost in our minds this afternoon is the significance of higher education, so I'm going to talk about that. Having been interested in education for years and served on boards of institutions, I've been trying for a long time to make up

my mind,—what is it, an educated man?—and because no one seems to have a definition, I offer one.

I have come to the conclusion that the educated man is a man who understands himself, the world in which he lives, and senses his responsibility towards that world. And I propose to list a few of the qualities of the educated man as I see them. Many there are, I am sorry to say, who possess diplomas such as will be distributed today, who cannot in the full sense of the word be treated as educated men. Not from Caltech. Perhaps from Harvard. And many there are who have never had the privilege of crossing a campus, who are in every sense educated.

The educated man

What are some of these qualities? First of all, to my way of thinking, the educated man is a man who has mastered one subject—who has addressed himself to a specific task and come completely inside it. That, your diploma certifies you have done. Now I care not, when I recruit young men for the steel industry, what that subject might be. It may be disconcerting to you young men, but I say that we in industry do not seek to employ you for what you know, but for your capacity, your proven capacity, to learn. And if a young man joins my company in the production of steel I don't care whether he's a metallurgist or took honors in the Greek classics. (That's a plug for myself—that's what I did.) But what I do care about is whether he has demonstrated that he can take a subject and lick it.

But that's only the beginning. The occupational disease, my friends, as men train in the sciences, is that they never can get outside and above the subjects in which they were trained. And the educated man must have a flexibility of mind. He must be able not only to master a subject, but to leave it. He must have the intellectual courage and facility to undertake to master a subject for which he was not trained.

You young men—as you come into industry, to the professions, it will be a very short time after your graduation before you will find that you are required to do things that you never undertook before. And so I say the educated man must have the ability to tread with confidence on unfamiliar ground.

And then the educated man must be able to deal, not only with facts, but with ideas. He must deal with the abstract as well as the concrete. Those of you who are trained in the scientific method will find there are problems in the world that cannot be solved by quantitative measurement or analysis. And therefore the educated man must deal not only with the specific but with the abstract. Among those abstract subjects, the educated man must deal today with the problems of human behavior.

You, the scientists, have pushed back the frontiers of our technical knowledge beyond the wildest flight of imagination, but in so doing you have given us a dreadfully complicated world. And the problems that men struggle with today in public life or in industry arise not

from our ignorance of the laws of nature, but from our lack of understanding of the human soul. The problems that we struggle with in industry are those of human behavior, and the educated man must come to have insight into the problems of human behavior.

He must first of all know himself. He must understand the impact that he makes upon those about him, and be sensitive to the unexpressed criticisms of his conduct by observing the reactions of others to himself.

Going beyond that, he must understand how to deal with groups. If he is to supervise others he must come to know that not all problems may be solved by the mind, because they are problems that stem from emotions. You gentlemen have taught us in the steel industry how to deal with stress in metal. We need to learn how to deal with stress in human beings. And the educated man of today must be capable both of understanding the physical laws and of understanding those that deal with the human heart.

The educated man, then, must understand how to communicate ideas to his fellows—by which I mean he must be able to write and speak the English language intelligibly. Now if I may suggest some minor criticism of our friends in science, it is that they speak to the world in their own idiom. They use their own patter. Sometimes we haven't the foggiest idea what it is about. Now if a man is to communicate ideas intelligently he must seek the idiom employed by those to whom he addresses himself. When a diplomat goes into a foreign country today, the first thing he does is to learn the language of that country. And people who are to communicate ideas must speak in the language of those to whom the ideas are addressed.

The age of ideas

This is the age of ideas. This is the period when men try avidly to capture the minds of others, and no idea today, however true, is effective if it remains locked up in the mind of an inarticulate scholar.

And then the educated man today must have a plan for his life. I once saw a ship whose motors were running at full speed but whose rudder had been disabled and it was a sorry sight. And nothing is more tragic than to find a man of brilliant mind, with great intelligence, who doesn't know what he's going to do with it. This means an understanding of the human soul, and the relationship of the human soul to the infinite world above and about us. Today you have reached a goal. Life consists of forming goals and seeking to achieve them. And the word "commencement" means to me today that you have reached a goal, and by so doing have brought to yourselves the necessity of establishing the next goal.

Now a man might have these and all of the other qualities that you might suggest and still not be educated. I think of the type of man of great intelligence who devotes his life solely to the cultivation of his mind for the enjoyment that that gives himself. And I say that that is the same sort of sin that a man commits who devotes his

life to making money and employing it solely for sensual pleasures.

The cultivation of the mind as such is not education. It is putting the cultivated mind at work in the modern world that is the final attribute of the educated man.

That was the great tragedy of the middle ages. The scholar, the learned man, found life intolerable. The world so frustrated him that he withdrew from the world and with the spirit of asceticism merely enjoyed for himself the cultivation of his mind. And that spread darkness throughout the world for centuries.

Today we live in a free society; we are the blessed of the earth in our freedom, and one of the great privileges of our free society is to receive the sort of education that you have received. It has come to you through *the imagination, the sacrifice, the determination of those* in the years behind who have formed this great institution. And for each privilege that we receive from a free society there must be a counter-balancing discharge of obligations to society. If we are to enjoy the benefits of freedom, we must measure up in full to its responsibilities and meet them; and so the educated man is rightly expected to exercise leadership in the world about him.

The antidote to self-interest

I hold the same belief about the business world from which I come. America has the strongest economy and the highest standard of living in the world because of our system of free enterprise. And that is sparked by the incentive of self-interest; but the antidote to self-interest by the business man is the voluntary assumption of responsibility toward society. And I am sorry that it is true that my brethren do not all hold that creed.

There are men who crop the fields of free enterprise and do nothing to restore the soil. There are men of high responsibility in the business world who live out their entire careers without sharing the responsibility for perpetuating the society that makes free enterprise possible.

I had the privilege a week or so ago of hearing a very distinguished address by Dr. DuBridge, in which he traced the history of science. And he pointed out that until Copernicus came, man believed the entire universe revolved about us, and that Copernicus taught the world that it was not so—that our earth revolved about the sun.

I know men in the business world today who ought to meet Copernicus. They still do not know that the whole world does not revolve about themselves, nor about their company.

Now, what does the young man do—the educated young man—to take his place in this sphere of responsibility? First of all, from the moment he goes to work he determines to have other interests in life than just the job. Now, the job is a major thing, and should be in any man's life, but the young man who lets the job absorb all and dominate every part of his life begins to atrophy; and when he reaches my age—standing as I do in the overhang of senility—he suddenly is a problem to his associates, to his company, and to his family because he

says, "If I should retire, what will I do?"

I know nothing as tragic as for a man to reach retirement age without ever having found anything in life that would afford unfinished business to him, after he closes his desk. So the first thing is to find some enthusiasm dealing with the world about you—to help fill your life over and above the job. You do this by working in your church; you do it by working with your schools; you do it by working with your community fund and the social agencies at the community level. And then as your life develops you broaden that. You have a part in forming sound political conditions about you. You enter into the affairs of your state. And then when your mature years come, you are ready to serve your country.

I have had the pleasure for two years of dividing my time between business and government, and I have learned much about the ways of business men and the ways of bureaucrats. And nothing disturbs me more than to come back, and at the Club or on a Pullman car—at about the third drink—to hear a man say, "Why don't they do so and so?" I have tried sometimes to get some of these enquirers after 'they' to join in and become part of 'we'; and it is not always easy to find that the self-appointed critic of government policy will come down and spend his own time and money to make the sacrifice to set it right.

"They" is "We"

In this you will see the meaning of my title today. I say to you most solemnly: There is no group of able, talented men with great leisure, waiting to answer the call of their country. No, my friends, there are no 'THEY'; there are only 'WE'. And if this great heritage of ours is to be preserved, it requires the effort of all of the people all of the time—and that means *you* and *me*.

I look forward to the day when young men—perhaps between the ages of 30 and 40—will take their regular turn at serving government either at the state or the national level, for a period of two years. We ask young men to die for their country; why should we not ask young men to live for their country?

I look forward to the day when great corporations will encourage their young men to enter the public service and help bear the sacrifice, in order that the young men may bring back to business the understanding of the problems of government, and take to government an understanding of business.

The leadership of our country in the years that lie ahead rests with just such people as are gathered here today. What we so proudly enjoy and oftentimes accept without thinking through has been wrought for us by the courage, the dedication, and the unselfishness of those who have gone before. We must not accept it passively. Ours is the greatest heritage in the world, and to pass on this torch to the age that lies ahead requires the constant daily effort of men like you and me.

That, my friends, is the challenge today to the educated man.